

Stevensville Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
for THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 2021, 6:30 PM

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Dewey: called the meeting to order, Councilmember's Allen, Devlin, Ludington were all present. (Councilmember Wandler joined after roll call)

CONDENSED MINUTES

2. Discussion on the Following Items

a. Discussion/Decision: COVID-19 Recovery Plan

Mayor Dewey: introduced COVID-19 Recovery Plan. Handed out changes to Town Services During Phase 1 of Governor's Reopening Plan. This document was authored back in April 2020. This is the best reference that I have in terms of planning that has been done to modify services as we move into recovery of COVID-19. A lot has changed since this was authored.

Councilmember Devlin: we want to modify this declaration and create a plan? What direction do we want to take?

Mayor Dewey: I think that you need to have a plan so that we can get rid of the declaration all together, spending time on modifying the declaration when what we need to do is get rid of it, I would like to see the plan being put into place. And then we can work towards getting rid of the declaration altogether.

Councilmember Wandler: (unclear audio) FEMA funding?

Mayor Dewey: the plan would have to be in place to receive FEMA funding.

Councilmember Delvin: we had a discussion around this, I just have a question about the benefits of when we do receive funds to the town, how that is reallocated into our budget.

Mayor Dewey: there are several different streams of funding that have been made available to the town of Stevensville. When the declaration was made it was to take advantage of FEMA money. that was before CARES and stimulus packages. When CARES was released, it changed the FEMA funds. We had to be specific with CARES funds, provide copies of checks and narratives. We were not sure how much was coming from CARES or from FEMA, today CARES don't exist all that money has been used up and we are now utilizing ARPA. ARPA is more flexible than the CARES funding was meaning there was some treasury money that came directly to the town and how you could use it. If there is a relationship between the pandemic and the town. If you are improving your infrastructure, it is much more flexible. We have already received the first half in June and will receive the second half next June. As I understand there is still some FEMA money available, we have not sot that funding at this time because we don't feel that we need to. the advantage of having the declaration in place for one is that it is required by FEMA to submit for the funding. We don't know what that looks like until we get an email that says this is what is available. Having the declaration in place we can move forward.

We set up things in the background so that we were ready. They want to see that you need it. (Gave an example of how that might work). CARES ended and the state stepped in.

Councilmember Devlin: I wasn't able to find any other municipality that is still under an emergency for COVID. Obviously, there are some benefits to staying, funding wise but is that enough to keep us in this.

Mayor Dewey: we have discussed already whether or not the declaration should stay in place to goal is to develop a plan to recover from the pandemic and get rid of the declaration. We need to focus on how is our community going to move forward.

Councilmember Devlin: I agree the question that I am asking determines phase 1 how long we stay in that what is the importance of it?

Mayor Dewey: you will have to answer that.

Councilmember Devlin: that is what I am asking if it is important.

Mayor Dewey: I think we go day by day. What I need from you is a threshold to rescind the emergency that does not exist, there is no threshold that says when this happens it is rescinded, and right now it is up to me and that is what upsets people. There is no policy for me to go up against. I am looking to you. If you develop a plan that either looks like this or your own plan. I need a trigger to let me know, then I will know what the expectation is.

Councilmember Ludington: this is what I am coming up against in the amount of time that I have had to do some research. They talk a lot about how to interact with the public. I think that we are in phase 3 of the reopening plan. (Unclear audio)

Mayor Dewey: according to the Montana state dashboard 48% of the eligible population in Ravalli County is fully vaccinated.

Councilmember Devlin: that is the reason for my questions too. We have had a short amount of time to do research. I don't know what they would be I know the questions that I am asked and the concerns that we will have. To come up with steps and there are people that say get rid of it completely people that say they don't care, people say keep it some say modify it. Then figuring out a phased-out plan.

Mayor Dewey: I think if you can articulate the element of a plan that you would like to see as specifically as possible allows the administration to pull it together for you, but we need to know what that starting place is.

Councilmember Allen: can we give a percentage of people that we want vaccinated before we change, like could we say 75% of people vaccinated in Ravalli County. We could do separate things.

Councilmember Devlin: we can create whatever guidelines we want. Going through Ravalli County emergency plan is from 2010 some apply some don't. I don't like the vaccination portion of this, I watched the school go through this. This year the school is just going moving along except for the on the school bus, you have to wear a mask on the school bus. There is not a solid plan that makes sense for steps. I do think that we are in phase three as well, which tells me we

are pretty much over it. Then I get on Ravalli County public health, and I read “pull up your bootstraps because here we go again”.

Mayor Dewey: if cases weren't climbing and we weren't getting notification that our hospitals in Missoula are at capacity I don't think we would be having this conversation. I would have rescinded the declaration myself, but that is not the case. We just happen to have this conversation the same time that everything is going the other direction in terms of case counts and impact on the community.

Councilmember Devlin: I am not prepared to come up with a phased plan.

Mayor Dewey: it is not my expectation that you dive deep into this, this evening. I think what is important is that you started the conversation. We are getting information from both Ravalli and Missoula County.

Councilmember Devlin: I am feeling discouraged, very discouraged.

Councilmember Ludington: I think that we are looking at a new sense of normal, I don't know what that is. We are looking at something that is comfortable enough for the mayor to reside the order. We have to be able to come up with something that is viable for the community to stay safe. The primary concern that we are dealing with at this point is parts of this declaration are giving parts of our community extreme heart burn. We have to look at what is safe for our people. I would like to think that there is not anything at this point that we are acting in any sense of emergency. I don't think that the mayor is going to supersede the authority of the council unless it becomes necessary. I don't know how to proceed from here I am like Jaime, I am a little uncomfortable. These are the things that we are dealing with and have not had to deal with, and we are trying to put our heads around this. Who are we taking care of ourselves, each other, our community? I am only interested in what is best for the community. If I had any inkling that something was going on I don't spend a lot of time at town hall, but I have spent my whole career around people and I know how they interact with me and each other and I can say that if there is something we will never find it until it is too late. I would like to state my reputation on the fact that there is nothing going on. I

Mayor Dewey: one option that you have if you want other resources from other communities, we can gather that for you and relay that to you. The fact is that prior to this meeting you were in budget mode and you and us did not have time to research this.

Councilmember Devlin: I think that would be helpful. There is contradicting information.

Mayor Dewey: we are kind of forging our own way, through different leagues and associations we may have some additional information.

Councilmember Allen: I think that it is important to have the data. I think what we have to look at is the numbers.

Mayor Dewey: is there anything else from the council before we open for public comment.

3. Public Comment

Jim Crews, 316 9th Street, the biggest problem that I have is section 8. Mr. Crews read from section 8. Noting in Title 10 says this. Have you seen the city attorneys review? I haven't. Where is the written plan? I haven't seen one. Mr. Crews commented on power of the mayor and the council.

Leanna Rodabaugh: 204 Ravalli Street, the problem that we have here is the last meeting that we had Mr. Crews explained the kind of government that we have. Ms. Rodabaugh commented on strong and weak mayor. Gave her opinion of the mayor.

Mayor Dewey: any further public comment, hearing none we will adjourn.

4. Adjournment

APPROVE:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brandon E. Dewey", written over a horizontal line.

Brandon E. Dewey, Mayor

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jenelle S. Berthoud", written over a horizontal line.

Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk